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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 001821

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PARM](#) [IR](#) [GR](#) [MARR](#) [MNUC](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGE PAPANDREOU INVITES IRANIAN FM MOTTAKI TO
"COFFEE" JULY 15 WITH THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDIUM

REF: A. ATHENS 01780

[1](#)B. ATHENS 01804

Classified By: Ambassador Charles P. Ries for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: George Papandreou's closest foreign policy adviser Droutsas told Ambassador July 13 that Iranian FM Mottaki would be joining the Socialist International Presidium "for coffee" on July 15 on the Greek island of Samos. The invitation was extended when Papandreou visited Tehran on behalf of the SI last month. Papandreou believes "channels of communication" with the Iranians should be kept open on the nuclear issue but has "strictly" kept to the international consensus on substance. Mottaki confirmed that he would come when he got an appointment with the government in Athens for July 14 (reftel). End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On July 13, Ambassador spoke to close George Papandreou aide Dimitris Droutsas to ask for more information on Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki's travel to the Greek island of Samos to meet with the Socialist International's "Presidium." Droutsas explained that Papandreou, as President of the Socialist International, has been interested in making the organization more visible and relevant, "taking advantage of" Papandreou's stature as a former Foreign Minister. On this rubric, Papandreou had traveled to Tehran last month, and to Syria this week. In Iran, Papandreou's expressed views that "did not deviate" from the international consensus. He urged the Iranians to accept the P5 plus 1 offer to resolve the nuclear dispute and to suspend enrichment.

[1](#)3. (C) Droutsas said that in order to continue in this effort to convince the Iranians to see the value in cooperating with the west, and "to keep lines of communication open," in Tehran Papandreou invited Mottaki to meet the SI Presidium on the margins of the Presidium's meeting in Samos July 15. Mottaki had said then he would look into his schedule and travel logistics. Papandreou's Pasok party subsequently learned that Mottaki was disposed to come only if he could also have a government meeting while in

Athens. As reported reftel, earlier this week Mottaki got a meeting with PM Karamanlis and then confirmed for Samos with the SI.

¶4. (C) Ambassador asked how it could be that the SI would invite to its meeting a Foreign Minister not otherwise affiliated (by party or otherwise) to the institution. Droutsas said Mottaki was not being invited to take part in the Presidium itself, and in fact Mottaki would only be in Samos for a matter of hours Saturday afternoon. When he arrives about 1 pm, the Presidium "will interrupt" its meeting and have "coffee" with Mottaki and chat about the Middle East region's problems. According to Droutsas, Papandreou intends to "reinforce" the message that Iran should accept the international community's nuclear offer, as well as press Mottaki to get its Hezbollah allies to be responsible in dealing with Israel, including by releasing the hostages. Following the coffee, Mottaki will leave Samos the same Saturday afternoon, Droutsas said.

¶5. (C) Thus far, the following Presidium members have confirmed their plans to travel to Samos for the meeting (spelling phonetic):

Mexico: Mr. Solorsano, Chairman of the PLD party and former Presidential candidate

Morocco: Mohamed El-Yazghi, Minister of the Environment

Turkey: Deniz Baykal, leader of the CHP party

Belgium: Elias di Rupo

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UK: Lord George Fowkes

Norway: Former PM Jaglund

Italy: Secretary General Fassimo of the Socialist Party

Hungary: Lazlo Kovac, EU Commissioner for Customs Affairs

Denmark: Former PM Rasmussen

Senegal: Socialist Party Secretary General Ding

¶6. (C) Ambassador expressed concern that at this delicate moment - when the P5 plus 1 foreign ministers had recommended that the Security Council take up the failure of Iran to take up the international community's offer on nuclear issues, and when the Iranian client Hezbollah militants had gravely exacerbated the crisis in the Middle East by taking hostages - to receive FM Mottaki in such a setting would give the wrong impression. Droutsas responded that Papandreou would stick "strictly" to the international consensus. In fact, Papandreou had been in direct touch recently with Under Secretary Burns and EU Secretary General Solana to make sure he understood what the international community is asking of Iran (and Syria) and to convey what he is hearing on his travels. Droutsas added that Papandreou "believes that at such moments it is important to keep channels of communication open."

¶7. (C) Ambassador asked for an appointment with Papandreou early next week to discuss these issues. Droutsas said that following the SI Presidium event, Papandreou will host the ninth annual weeklong "Symi Conference," (also in Samos) and so will not be in Athens until the week of July 28. (Attending the Symi conference are a variety of international academics including Richard Parker of the JFK School at Harvard and Nobel prize winning economist Amartya Sen.)

¶8. (C) Comment: As leader of Pasok, the leading Greek opposition party, Papandreou is finding it hard to make progress against the governing New Democracy party, and local

elections are approaching in October. Pasok's message has been muddled on such high profile issues as educational reform or economic management. The party faithful are increasingly muttering about his leadership and the poll numbers are down. The bad domestic news perhaps explains why Papandreou has a renewed interest in using his SI Presidency to gallivant in foreign affairs, his first love in any case. Septel follows on Pasok's woes.

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